

BOOK REVIEW

FERNANDO SANTOS-GRANERO and FEDERICA BARCLAY (translated by Elisabeth King). *Selva Central. History, Economy and Land Use in Peruvian Amazonia*. (ISBN 1-56098-761-8, hbk). Smithsonian Institution Press, 470 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 7100, Washington, DC 20560. 202-287-3738, ext. 343. 351 Pp.

This book is a translation, originally published in Spanish as *Ordenes y desórdenes en la Selva Central*, in 1995. Many thanks should go to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, and especially Ira Rubinoff, for encouraging its translation.

The book covers the Selva Central region of Peru, also called the "central montaña, composed of portions from the western portions of: Oxapampa Province, in the Department of Pasco, and Chanchamayo and Satipo Provinces in the Department of Junín. This is one of the two most biologically interesting parts of the country because of its myriad of habitat types, from high altitude "jalca" on sandstone containing Guayana Highland floristic elements, to middle elevation "ceja de selva," largely comprised of cloud and montane forest with many endemic species. The book is largely a socio-economic history of the region, but it also contains extremely valuable information on the ecological characteristics, the effects of agropastoral and logging activities, and other aspects related to land tenure, including the unique "minifundios."

The book is divided in three parts: genesis of a regional space, the colonist economy, and indigenous integration. While this kind of book may not be a normal acquisition for the everyday monographer or floristician, anyone concerned with long-term conservation of any tropical area is well-served by reading this. I have found that to establish long-term studies, it is critical to understand the evolution of the local populations, (be they indigenous or otherwise) so that our in-country counterparts might better translate our concerns for basic science into information for the applied world of the local residents. The most important part for me was the second one, especially chapters four, five and six, where the land tenure systems, patterns and intensity of land use, and finally, economic articulation and environmental degradation themes are discussed, respectively. Having worked in Peru since 1990, reading of this book gave me a new appreciation for the complexities of managing the biotic resources of the region. While several portions of the "conclusions" chapter are now outdated, and support a particular political point of view, the three chapters of the second part certainly make this book a worthwhile investment for any botanist working in the Andes, and especially, in Amazonia. This book is not only appropriate for acquisition by botanical libraries, but also for ethnobotanists, and for anyone assisting in the establishment of Integrated Conservation and Development areas.—*John J. Pipoly III.*